

A Left Bank of the Mind

People keep asking me, When are you going
to get to Paris? Paris! For Christ's sake
I can't even get to the office to type up poems,
with my goddam arcane car rotting at the service

station. Paris! What would I do with Paris?
Take my wife to the Seine and kiss her
madly, hoping wise old men would stop to
admire and say, "Ah, the mad poet from Long Beach!"

I can see myself confronted with tons of Good
French Bread -- sour crusty The Real Stuff.
But I've already grown obese on hot dog buns
and I'd never be able to afford the Moulin Rouge.

I suppose I could play Hemingway, but hell
I even lose on the races at Del Mar and Caliente
and there are plenty of Spanish wines at the corner
liquor store and there's no reason to go

thousands of miles just to make love to
coeds from UCLA. Paris! They say the
air is better. What difference does the air make --
I'd be smoking three packs a day the same as here,

basking somewhat nauseated in my portable smog.
But what about the SIGHTS. Now tell me, what,
once you've seen it, do you do with a SIGHT?
As a matter of fact I have no visual memory

at all, am bad at impressionistic prose,
and really enjoy about nothing except booze and jazz.
The Cathedrals would be worst of all. What
in the world can you do with a Cathedral?

I mean, Henry Adams gave it a try
and just about brought writing in America
to a standstill. I tried to read him once
in high school and he drove me back to football.

I'd probably walk in circles in some ancient
nave trying to think appropriately
elevated thoughts until I tripped
and hit my head on a cobblestone and died.

Okay okay maybe someday. Someday
I may succumb. Succumb? To what?
The Bel Air is still at the service station,
its joints eroded by the friction of the times.

-- Gerald Locklin